

Honda Packing Crate Finds Place In Art

The Civilization of Llhuros | Indianapolis Museum of Art
The Indianapolis News | November 7, 1973

The Civilization of Llhuros, which flourished at a time unknown and whose artifacts are just coming to light through extensive excavation in Vanibo, Houndee and Draikum, was a very thrifty civilization judging from the art it left behind.

Pliers standing upright form a miniature version of the Temple of Holmeek. The frame of an old iron forms the grate for a "votive," a kind of container in which the people of Llhuros kept their sacred manuscripts during the archaic period.

A bronze-coated glass orange-juice squeezer is turned "into a "trallib" or container for oil. The packing crate for a 1970 Honda is built into a beautiful blue stone-like wall.

These are the kinds of things the people of Llhuros produced. They are on view in a crazy exhibit at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Krannert Pavilion south gallery, courtesy of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University.

The exhibit opened today along with the companion display of 25 original Crazy Kat comic strips from the Sunday pages of newspapers published from 1916 to 1923.



Temple of Holmeek
Miniature Replica

The Krazy Kat cartoons are in Krannert Pavilion's second floor Beesley Gallery, and they are great fun to look at. But it's the civilization of Llhuros that most captivates the mind. It's all a put-on, of course, and one of the most inventive put-ons in some time.

Perpetrator of the spoof is Norman Daly, balding, bearded professor of painting and sculpture at Cornell. His specialty used to be sculpture created from "found" objects. But, he admits, people weren't paying attention to these "found" objects when they were just "found" objects. At one exhibit, in fact, a viewer mistook one of his "found" constructions for a working hat rack and put it to work.

Something more was needed, Daly decided, and that something was a context with-in which the sculptures could be viewed differently. Now, as every student of archeology knows, an object found in either an ancient tomb or a newly dug up 4,000 year-old city doesn't have to be beautiful or recognizable or anything like that. It only need be there to be valuable.

So Daly invented Llhuros, provided it with more than 100 artifacts, fragments, totems (mostly sexual as usual), poetry and music and surrounded the whole with a delightfully daft written history crediting all sorts of invented ethnological and archeological experts for the findings.

Most people think the exhibit is a spoof on scholarship, but Daly denies this. To him it is a satire on today's culture, where "in our lives we con people into believing how good we are. We're very adept at simulating what we aren't. We live with so many duplicities."

The Civilization of Llhuros will remain on display through Dec. 16. Daly will be at the museum to lecture on it Nov. 14 at 8:30 in the DeBoest Lecture Hall.

by Marion Simon Garmel for The Indianapolis News, Paint Brush column

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By MARION SIMON GARMEL

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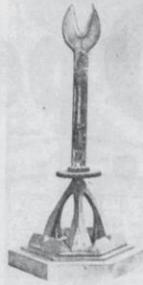


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